

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 043597

NODIS
CHEROKEE/FOR DR BRZEZINSKI ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT SEOUL 1613 ACTION SECSTATE 26 FEB 77

QUOTE S E C R E T SEOUL 1613

NODIS

CHEROKEE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM PINT SHUM
SUBJ: REPLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER

REF: STATE 33148

(TRANSLATION)

FEBRUARY 26, 1977

DEAR PRESIDENT CARTER;
SECRET

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1. I WISH TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER DELIVERED
TO ME ON THE 15TH OF FEBRUARY BY AMBASSADOR SNEIDER.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR CONVEYING PERSONALLY TO ME,
AT AN EARLY STAGE OF YOUR ADMINISTRATION, THE UNITED
STATES GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO THE
SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND YOUR DEEP
PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE KOREAN SITUATION.

2. AS YOU POINTED OUT, OUR TWO COUNTRIES ARE CLOSE
ALLIES WHICH HAVE TRADITIONALLY MAINTAINED A FRIENDLY

AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP. IN PARTICULAR, THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE ALWAYS REMEMBER WITH GRATITUDE THAT YOUR GREAT COUNTRY DID NOT HESITATE TO RENDER INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE TO US IN TIME OF GREAT DIFFICULTIES. IT IS INDEED HEARTENING TO US THAT YOU MADE CLEAR YOUR INTENTION TO CONTINUE THIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP, AND I WISH TO TAKE THIS OCCASION TO ASSURE YOU THAT I AND MY GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE, AS IN THE PAST, THE CONSISTENT POLICY OF MAINTAINING AND FURTHER CEMENTING THE CLOSE TIES EXISTING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE PROBLEM OF REDUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES GROUND COMBAT FORCES IN KOREA, MENTIONED IN YOUR LETTER, MY GOVERNMENT HAS CLOSELY FOLLOWED ITS DEVELOPMENTS WITH KEEN INTEREST. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE UNITED STATES FORCES IN KOREA, BOTH AS VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE KOREAN-AMERICAN MUTUAL DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT AND AS AN INDISPENSABLE FACTOR IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THIS AREA, HAS BEEN PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DETERRING THE RECURRENCE OF WAR ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND IN ENSURING PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE NORTHEAST ASIAN REGION AS A WHOLE.

4. ACCORDINGLY, I APPRECIATE YOUR VIEW THAT ANY
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REDUCTION OF THE UNITED STATES GROUND FORCES, REGARDLESS OF ITS SIZE AND SCOPE, WILL BE APPROACHED IN A MANNER WHICH LEADS NEITHER TO THE MISINTERPRETATION OF THE UNITED STATES DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN ITS COMMITMENT TO THE DEFENSE OF THIS REPUBLIC NOR TO UPSETTING THE OVERALL MILITARY BALANCE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. ALSO, I AM PLEASED TO NOTE YOUR ASSURANCE THAT THE FULLEST PRIOR CONSULTATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, THE TWO IMMEDIATE PARTIES CONCERNED, BEFORE ANY DECISION IS MADE IN THIS REGARD.

5. AT A TIME WHEN THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT ABANDONED THEIR SINISTER SCHEME OF COMMUNIZING THE WHOLE OF KOREA BY MEANS OF FORCE OR VIOLENCE, AND WHEN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA'S SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITIES HAVE NOT YET REACHED THE SUFFICIENT STAGE, MY GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT ANY REDUCTION IN THE CURRENT LEVEL OF THE UNITED STATES FORCES IN KOREA IS NOT DESIRABLE AND, THEREFORE, HOPES THAT ANY SUCH CHANGE WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME. BUT I WISH TO STATE THAT IF YOUR GOVERNMENT PROPOSES TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS IN THIS REGARD, MY GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ENTER INTO SUCH CONSULTATIONS IN GOOD FAITH AND IN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION THAT HAS

CHARACTERIZED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

6. I APPRECIATE YOUR DECISION TO FORWARD TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS A REQUEST FOR \$275 MILLION IN FOREIGN MILITARY SALES DEFENSE GUARANTEED LOANS FOR UPGRADING KOREA'S DEFENSE CAPABILITIES IN FISCAL YEAR 1978 AND YOUR WILLINGNESS TO VIGOROUSLY DEFEND THIS REQUEST. AS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FACES THE ENORMOUS TASKS OF DEVELOPING HER NATIONAL ECONOMY AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF HER PEOPLE AND AT THE SAME TIME IS BURDENED WITH THE
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HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY OF STRENGTHENING SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITIES. HOWEVER, WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO THE BEST WITHIN OUR MEANS TO MEET THIS CHALLENGE.

7. IN CONNECTION WITH THE RECENT TREND IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, YOU EXPRESSED YOUR CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. I PAY TRIBUTE TO YOU FOR EMPHASIZING ON MANY OCCASIONS, PARTICULARLY IN YOUR INAUGURAL ADDRESS, THE IMPORTANCE OF MORALITY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN POLITICS, FOREIGN RELATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION, SINCE I MYSELF SUBSCRIBE TO THOSE LOFTY POLITICAL IDEALS.

8. RECENTLY, SOME PEOPLE AT HOME AND ABROAD WHO ARE OPPOSED TO THE PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM OF MY COUNTRY HAVE BEEN TRYING TO INSINUATE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE BEING REPRESSED OR INFRINGED UPON IN KOREA. SUCH ALLEGATIONS APPARENTLY STEM FROM THEIR FAILURE OR RELUCTANCE TO CORRECTLY UNDERSTAND THE SPECIAL SITUATION EXISTING ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA OR THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED.

9. UNDER THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES OF NATIONAL DIVISION, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA HAS BEEN MAKING STEADY PROGRESS AS A FREE DEMOCRATIC NATION WHILE COPING WITH WAR PROVOCATIONS AND INCESSANT MILITARY THREATS BY THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNIST REGIME WHICH TOTALLY DENIES INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS OR HUMAN RIGHTS TO ITS PEOPLE AND INDULGES IN MERCILESS REPRESSION. UNFORTUNATELY, IN THE ABSENCE OF LONG TRADITION AND SOLID FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, SOME SENSELESS ELEMENTS IN OUR SOCIETY TENDED TO RESORT TO RADICAL AND ILLEGAL ANTI-STATE ACTIONS, THEREBY NOT ONLY ENDANGERING POLITICAL STABILITY, SOCIAL ORDER AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUT ALSO CREATING A GRAVE THREAT TO THE VERY EXISTENCE OF OUR NATION.
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10. YOU WILL NO DOUBT UNDERSTAND THAT THE PREVENTION OF WAR AND COMMUNIZATION OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA IS THE FOREMOST CONCERN IN THE MINDS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE. WE IN KOREA ARE A PEOPLE WHO EXPERIENCED THE SCOURGE OF COMMUNIST AGGRESSION. WE ALSO KNOW THAT, IN SPITE OF OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS FOR SECURING A PERMANENT PEACE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS HAVE NEVER GIVEN UP THEIR AVOWED SCHEME OF BRINGING THE WHOLE OF KOREAN UNDER THEIR DOMINATION. FURTHERMORE, FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, THEY HAVE PERSISTENTLY PURSUED THE SCHEME OF FOMENTING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONFUSION WITH A VIEW TO INSTIGATING THE UPRISING OF THE SO-CALLED POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY FORCE IN THE SOUTH.

11. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT ANY ACTS LEADING TO POLITICAL CONFUSION AND SOCIAL CHAOS OR DETRIMENTAL TO NATIONAL UNITY WOULD, BY EXPOSING A GRAVE VULNERABILITY TO THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNISTS, BE TANTAMOUNT TO AN OPEN INVITATION TO THEM TO LAUNCH AN AGGRESSION AGAINST US. THUS, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE REALIZE THAT THE RESERVATION OF SOME OF THEIR RIGHTS IS UNAVOIDABLE IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SECURITY, STABILITY AND THE VERY SURVIVAL OF THE NATION. WITH THIS UNDERSTANDING, THEY CAME TO FULLY SUPPORT THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THIS REGARD.

12. IT IS TO BE NOTED THAT OUR CONSTITUTION, WHILE GUARANTEEING THE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUDING THE ONE TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT, CONTAINS EXPLICIT PROVISIONS EMPOWERING THE PRESIDENT TO ISSUE EMERGENCY DECREES INCLUDING THE LIMITATION OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN TIME OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY OR WHEN THE NATION'S SECURITY IS SERIOUSLY THREATENED.

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THESE PROVISIONS IN OUR CONSTITUTION WERE SUPPORTED AND APPROVED BY THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE THROUGH THE NATIONAL REFERENDA HELD ON TWO OCCASIONS IN THE PAST. I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS INCUMBENT UPON THE PRESIDENT WHO IS ENTRUSTED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SAFEGUARDING THE SECURITY OF THE NATION TO TAKE NECESSARY MEASURES TO COPE WITH THE THREAT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS.

13. AS ALL MEN ARE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW, NO ONE WHO HAS VIOLATED IT CAN BE EXEMPTED FROM BEING DEALT WITH ACCORDING TO THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF THE LAW.

THEREFORE, THOSE WHO ARE BEING TRIED ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE EMERGENCY DECREES PROMULGATED UNDER THE EXPLICIT PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THEY ARE BEING TRIED THROUGH DUE PROCESS OF LAW BY AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY IN OPEN AND FAIR COURTS. THEY ARE ALSO GUARANTEED OF APPEALS TO HIGHER AND SUPREME COURTS. THE COURT ALONE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER A PERSON IS GUILTY OR NOT. I AND MY GOVERNMENT ARE CONVINCED THAT SINCE THIS PROCESS IS THE DUE APPLICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND DOMESTIC LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES DO NOT EXIST IN KOREA.

14. I WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSTITUTION AND RELEVANT LAWS. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT INASMUCH AS THE LAW IS EXECUTED FAIRLY AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH LAWFUL PROCEDURES, THERE CANNOT EXIST ANY VALID GROUND FOR ALLEGING THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ARBITRARILY VIOLATED IN KOREA.

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15. MY SOLE WISH AND INTENTION ARE TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE AS A FREE NATION AND ULTIMATELY TO MAKE ALL OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE ENJOY FREEDOMS AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS TO THE FULLEST DEGREE. FOR THIS, WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO BRING ABOUT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STABILITY AND CONTINUED ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN NATIONAL UNITY AND HARMONY AND TO FORESTALL THE NORTH KOREAN COMMUNIST AGGRESSION BY STRENGTHENING OUR DEFENSE CAPABILITIES. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT WITH DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION YOU WILL PLACE YOUR CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN WHAT I INTEND TO DO AND GIVE YOUR SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO OUR PAINSTAKING EFFORTS FOR THE SURVIVAL AND FREEDOM OF THE ENTIRE 35 MILLION KOREAN PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH.

16. I SHARE YOUR HOPE AND CONFIDENCE THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE TO FURTHER PROMOTE THE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP IN SECURITY AND OTHER IMPORTANT FIELDS. WITH THIS IN MIND, I AM IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR VIEW THAT WE SHOULD CONDUCT FRANK CONSULTATIONS WITH EACH OTHER ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN AND INTEREST WITH FULL RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE BOTH OF US ATTACH TO OUR TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP. I AM CONFIDENT THAT MY FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT LEADERS DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES WILL PROVE TO BE BOTH FRUITFUL AND REWARDING.

17. I WISH TO EXTEND ONCE AGAIN MY HEARTIEST
CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ON YOUR INAUGURATION AND MY
WARMEST WISHES TO YOU AND OUR ADMINISTRATION FOR
EVERY SUCCESS AND GOOD FORTUNE.

SINCERELY,

SECRET

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/S/ PARK CHUNG HEE

HIS EXCELLENCY
JIMMY CARTER
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON, D.D.
U.S.A.

SNEIDER
UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

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